

COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF LITERATURE IN RUSSIA: EXPLORATION OF NEW PARADIGMS

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the problem of methodological status of the modern Russian literature comparative studies. On the basis of point survey of purpose academic texts the deduction of exhaustiveness of the classical model of comparative-contrastive surveys has been given and it becomes firmly convinced of the necessity of forming new research paradigm, theoretically oriented to so called synergetic constituent of all humanities. In this respect it seems extremely important to read «occidental» (in the broad sense of the word, including Russian) literary works through the prism «oriental» metalanguage as historically primary and, apparently, reflecting not only cultural universal phenomena of oriental regional world-view proper, but – mostly in relief – anthropological experience of creative fantasy and memory. The noted thought belonging to M.M. Bakhtin about importance of involvement of long cultural contexts in the process of understanding the concrete literary phenomenon has not been exhausted yet. In the world literature, in the author's opinion of the article, and also in social life, here the law of peculiar «work distribution» is in effect, that enables to take into account the potential reader's «stand» with his own sound worldview when interpreting complicated philological artifacts. A literary text is a «geographical» map, on which a sophisticated writer traces multiple differently directed characters that require conceptual decoding in accordance with the complementary principle.

Key words: literary comparative studies, methodology, «oriental» turn, dialogue, metalanguage, consciousness.

1. INTRODUCTION

The impression is that Russian literary comparative studies, that used to have so swift and multi-faceted development in the sixtieth – seventieth year of the twentieth century, endures today if not too deep but, at any rate, perceptibly visible crisis of theoretical-methodological nature, a kind of conceptual stagnation. Marked characteristic of such exploratory «hard times» becomes «rhetoric of crisis», which some modern literary theorists write about [1].

Indeed, on the one hand, it appears to be published the works of comparative-contrastive nature that touch mainly incidental points of interaction of some national-literary systems [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. On the other hand – considering these works more carefully it is not difficult to reveal that their fundamental («root») paradigm solidly fits usual and well-developed comparative methodology of the previous years. In some works this methodology actively «is diluted» by terminological set of post-modernist discourse that corresponds to modern tendency [7]. Thus, for example, among the other things, one cannot but note that actively practiced by Russian comparativists of the last periods typological approach has remained at close quarters with historical-genetic «measurements» so far, that has been probably only well-studied since A.N. Veselovsky's illustrious «Historical poetry» way of understanding a figurative word in universal dimension and national specific character.

It is appropriate, nevertheless, to point to the fact that inertness of the previous methodological studies is expanded by an attempt at conceiving and describing the phenomenon of interaction of literary worlds in the historical view. What does this attempt lies in if to characterize it in brief and to the point, without sidetracking details? What solid base does it come from and have, in general, a perspective of logical scientific development? All these problems will be dealt with in the article.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Various scientific theories giving the comprehension of the problems of interaction between literatures and, on the whole, between cultural traditions of the West and the East are the material of our investigation. The principal method is historical–descriptive with the elements of analytical conceptualization.

We proceed from the fact that critical looking into the problems of modern comparative studies cannot be an end in itself, a task in itself. In situation of permanent crisis spread over Russian comparative studies the investigator owes to suggest all possible ways out whichever polemical they seemed to appear at first sight; otherwise, he takes up position of too isolated observer who uses objectivity principle for plain statements of existing view points and ignores the law of turning quantity into qualitative changes. M.M. Bakhtin's argument according to which the study of literature as a science is new even in terms of history has not lost its actuality so far, that is why it requires the broadest and the most unflinching problem statement, considerably major «experimental work» in the process of elaborating needed strategy [8]. Literature is not a set of meaningless facts but a system requiring coherent interpretation. Hence it appears the necessity of not eclectic synthesis of comparative studies with other branches of science.

3. RESULTS

Let us begin with the fact that, according to our observations, there exists a whole number of heterogeneous phenomena in literary works which are difficult to explain staying within epistemological traditions, but if they are possible to be explained then the result will be approximate, fragmentary. To such phenomena one can refer the situations of whatever random, outwardly not reasoned correlations of characters in literary heritage of the writers belonging to different

national cultures. Thinking here as if «undeliberate» correlation was caused by typo logicity of living forms reflected in the text as V. M. Zhymunsky used to teach [9], the argument «ad absurdum» impedes. The forms of social objective reality in spiritually equal contexts may essentially differ from each other, and each attempt of their combination in one positive denominator has to be admitted, though with reservations, to be the product of artificial schematization. Together with genetic approach and other viewpoints, from clear conscious reception to vaguely conscious perception, by logically true attitude, the set of all direct and indirect impacts requires to be taken into account, this argument was used to be pointed to by A.N.Veselovsky[10]. But this process has been remaining rather unfeasible ideal then actually possible practice on account of absence of formalized criterion, applied to instructive criteria.

In such cases naturally enough that the desire for dipping into the field of «unobvious» text structure arises and having found bearing point there to elaborate methods of discovered reality study. The existing palette of approaches is limited here, but, thanks to persistent applying it, definitely tells about priority of the newest directives. The latter is realized in the aspect of various original thesis тезисов, from pointing to «peculiar», «half esoteric» acts of the word artist's recall of the facts of pretersensual order to statement of the presence of basic universals uniting the systems of many faces together. It is clear that the main complicity of these directives lies in the absence of adequate metalanguage in which rational, discursive presentations might complement irrational, intuitively well-grounded ones. In other words, the language of renewed literary methodology should combine thinking and contemplation thereby returning indigenous subject-object unity to reflective thought.

In modern Russian literature analytics there exist judgment about complete «non merging» and even proneness to conflict of these two forms of cognition due to their nonidentity, unnatural status. Such point of view is pushed rather well-reasoned by V. I. Tyupa [11]. But is it interesting to ask oneself about the source of this conflict taking into account the circumstances that in many ways is the result of European intellectual vector of development of the World literature? It is no coincidence that counterpoint of logos and eidos goes through the whole history of West European philosophy with prevailing motif, and if in the beginning –in ancient Greek variant- the desire to keep the parts of the whole study (in dialogues of Platon and works of Aristotle) in equilibrium predominated then in subsequent periods this balance was disturbed, most frequently towards determinate logos. Oriental cultures, geographically distant from the Mediterranean area, did not used the extremes of tragic counterpoint. Is it reasonable to point to principled possibility of constructing special metalanguage in comparative studies that would have taken into consideration rational and contemplative constituent of single human knowledge in grounds? In this concrete case it is a matter of potentiality of interpretation of some traditionally «occidental» literary works through the prism of oriental poetics (in its main categorical apparatus).

Indeed, the significant counter-evidence here is the thesis according to which any poetry is composed on the basis of already existed national word-literary experience as its rational verbalization in systemized definitions. In view of the mentioned above it is impossible to connect different, at first sight, bearing regulations: because you know that the term «literature» refers to a number of historically changeable; is it necessary to indicate to its being changeable in geographical and local and cultural maps? Nevertheless, it phenomenologically appears, very likely, that human's thinking despite historical, social and cultural aberration remains equals in essentiality. The sphere of this essentiality predetermines possibility of its decoding with the help of cultural target text where it has been already discussed and rationalized the subject matter of the current study in new situations. In world culture and also in social life the law of «division of labor» acts, and when interpreting literary artifact with complex structure it becomes possible to take into account the stand of potential and ideal reader with another worldview (in this case – oriental).

The most convenient way of theorization of this idea (in respect of, though, historical-philosophical texts) we find in the works of E.A.Torchinov. In opinion of Buddhologist of St Petersburg, the development of European self-consciousness was in close relation with oriental myth thinking, however, great number of reasons rejected real meeting of these two cultures [12]. As a result, the Orient has not become spiritual matrix with a set of invariant properties for «true-to-life world» (E.Gusserl) European culture. Meanwhile, rich experience of psychic study of a creator, various meditative practices concerning the phenomenon of «altered state of consciousness», transpersonal perception – all these could broaden awareness of a person as such and those worlds that he creates in his artistic perception.

It is thought that comparative studies are needed to alter the vector of theoretical development, putting the accent from a priori «occidental» worldview to de bene esse «oriental» with conceivable caution and relying not only on external descriptiveness but particular perception of shaping consciousness realized in text form. There exist not the least of reason for such «oriental-centered» turn.

It is reasonable to remember that] one of the researchers who clearly realized and directly formulated the idea of exhaustiveness of classical model of methodology in the field of comparative literature studies was Yu. M. Lotman. Pointing to existence of factors in which «impulse to interaction is proved to be not resemblance or convergence, but difference» [13], he laid stress on the necessity of clarification not premises only but mechanisms of dialogues of cultures. In the light of semiotics this problem is understood as interrelation of autonomous artistic consciousnesses capable in the process of communication to transform primary meanings by generating new ones.

The presented concept, revealed in other works of the investigator, is capable, in our opinion, to correct the character of present comparative surveys in the attempt to explain the specificity of those literary phenomena that do not fit the traditional scheme of не «typological similarity / genetic relationship». We mean synergetic paradigm in its peculiar «adaptation» for defining mechanics of dialogues of artistic worlds that are at considerable historical-cultural distance from each other[14]. Synergy should be understood in this case not only as interdisciplinary study about non-linear spontaneous studies but – in narrow sense – not always defined in words «power energy» («field of force») of the world literary process. Synergy points out to hidden existence of «semantic dominant» This on a world-wide scale if to use the term introduced by psychologist L.S. Vygotsky, interpreting it in broad sense. This «semantic dominant» in the context of universal movement represents intellectual and emotional pattern that possesses the whole set of certain features, the particular «trend» that, in dynamic regime, under certain circumstances, realizes the given system of potential meanings. Apparently, this pattern is not feasible to relate to traditional idea about itinerant characters and fictions; it possesses self-reliant ontological status as a variety of artistic cognition: and itinerant «grain» of the fiction and itinerant motif-fiction structure are its derivatives. Let us define more exactly that this «trend» of consciousness is not equivalent to «universal and historic » stages of universal development. Firstly, highlighting these stages is a product of European educational philosophy of the 18th century, inclined to consider human history as presentation of one progressive historic line. Secondly, summarized plan of these stages does not take into account heterogeneous and multi-faceted complexity of the culture in which determination of the leading processes is in indispensable link with probabilistic outcome of the events and, consequently, with possibility /

impossibility of realization of some principles. To additional interpretation of «semantic dominant», thus, is more relative the introduced by M.M Bakhtin notion of «long time» – historical length, within the limits of which any sense as a process and result, in reality, has never disappeared, being embodied in another form after prolonged cultural oblivion.

Synergetic constituent of worldwide movement allows to broader look into the problem of dialogue of the Occident and the Orient as certain points of synergetic conception actually arise to oriental studies of synthetic and energetic nature of objective reality. Thus, according to A.M.Sayapova, holistic-systematic approach to things had been formulated by Spanish –Muslim philosopher of the end of the 12th century, Ibn Arabi yet: «All continuum of the objective reality is an entity, self-sufficient and multiple in itself » [15]. Analogous reasoning can be traced in religious philosophical experience of adherents of Chinese Dao [16]. If to add to the aforesaid axioms the fact that rational truth of oriental mystics discovers itself in intuitive and contemplative, not logical ways of revelation, the pattern of interaction of various cultures will take the form of worldwide system worked on the principle of self-organized «resonance».

The nature of «resonance» and arisen on its basis « resonance space» has remained obscure. There is reason to believe that the source of «resonance» includes those ontological features to which meditative consciousness (especially poetic), keen to sophisticated semantic overtones of the figurative word («echo-meaning»), gravitate. There are lots of the sources of worldwide «resonance» in culture history; it is enough to remember the theory of «axial time» by K.Ya. Aspers. Nevertheless, when one says about poetic forms of reflection in a dialogue between the Occident and the Orient then the eastern «source» of resonance reveals to be primary; it essential to be considered as starting point of the movement of literary reasoning in closed environment. In this connection, it is worth paying attention to the example from Italian literature in order to Стоит в этой связи обратить внимание на один пример из итальянской литературы grasp the point of synergetic approach.

It is known that for a long time the investigators of Dante's works had rejected the possibility of influence of the traditional Muslim eschatology on created by Florentine «The Divine comedy» in three-part worldview. The main obstacle to convergence was the fact that Dante did not speak Arabic and if used Koranic legends then in the form of stinky fragments translated into Latin by the representatives of the school of Toledo. In recent investigations [17], however, it was proved that in «The Divine Comedy» Dante formulated the principles of creative fictitious («imaginary») mworld reflecting an individual experience of self-perception, «journey into oneself». In the Orient the structure of this genre has been existed since the times. And it hits upon an idea that there exists a canon of «cognitive movement» that recurs to memory every time when a genius literary artist with intuitive thinking appeals to the complex of his own emotions and logic and semantic constructions. The language contradiction is inessential here, it may be ignored. In this case M.M.Bakhtin used to prefer pointing to «historical-cultural telepathy», though the suggested term seems to be not quite apt turn owing to its parascientific sounding that leads to speculative conclusions and estimation. Essential is here that an idea is a universal, «ancestral» phenomenon (E. Gussel) which acquires international predetermination in coded message on the basis of «inner speech». This speech (poetically fractured) was first in the Orient for many reasons. For this reason by preparing for materials of «Occidental-oriental divan» Goethe had the right to state «German and Persian poetry is a single unit» [18].

Let us take notice that the source of «resonance» does not come to archetypes. Archetypical construction and their role in diachronic study of culture, beyond question, should be taken into account. But emphasis should be placed not on archetypical ground of image but on its being entrenched culturally. «Pure» thought is turned out to be always cultural-colored that consists of layers heterogeneous in time like archaeological layers of earth. The layers are opened up according as the investigator as a competent reader is capable of responding to them by hermeneutical work [19]. The theory of inter text springing to mind is interpreted by us as relative pattern since difference of inter text from relation of «resonance» type is that the latter studies not only richness of text content but structure of full range of semantic text, «curve» of message, its «turn», «style», «ornament». In this respect interpretative translation acquires the traits of depth content discontinuing simple communication of «national universals» and turning into a part of ontology of human consciousness. It points to the existence of depth-universal aspects of cognitive experience in conformity with which the objective reality of a human being is determined by attitude to inner communication that is ceaseless and not determined by lingvo psychological contacts. The main point of «grammar» of ontological dialogue is principled focus on «Other» for insight into «Oneself». Attitude to «Other» constitutes the subjective world of «Ego» forming clearness[20]. Let us give an example.

A.A. Block reflecting on essence of poetry wrote: «It is a lie that thoughts recur. Every thought is new as new things surround and form it». And, proving it, he gave a characteristic illustration in the spirit of the Persian literary Middle Ages: «“Чтоб он, воскреснув, встать не мог / May he not get up after having revived “» (my <phrase – R.B.>); “Чтоб встать он из гроба не мог / May he not rise from the dead” (Lermontov, – could remember) – absolutely different thoughts. The common one in them – “content” that proves once more that formless content does not exist of itself, is of no importance. God is a form, only things filled with sacred form breathe»[21]. The occidental writer could consider that two illustrated lyric phrases were cliché of the content from which ideally one was to get free in order the dialogue of mutually interested parts turned to be realizable. The Oriental author of the Middle Ages, contrariwise, as well as A.A.Block, would see two thoughts in one phrase (It is the «turn» of thought that becomes the subject of synergetic conception). It is interesting that A.A. Block considered the phrase with the meaning of raising from the dead in spontaneous flight of thought chooses the poet (M.Yu. Lermontov) by analogy who could «respond» to him. In his poetry the Persian poet usually acted in this way, establishing «genealogy» of traditional figurativeness and hidden in it literary work of many generations (compare popular genre of «nazir» in medieval Iran). The medieval author saw his role in approximating target texts and explicit / implicit dialogue-poleemics with them.

It should be noted that the problem of «resonance space» (without using this term) was viewed critically in humanities. Some conceptions of «resonances» as great, hidden historic waves meeting with state of biosphere, are revealed in the works of L.N.Gumilyev – the works that often draw criticism in Russian and are notable for absolute scientific depth rather in individual moments then in main highlights. Besides, some views of «resonance» we discover in «esoteric» schools of linguistics supposing that the study of structural features of human languages does not give complete answers to the question of a kind of strange and irregular coincidence of lexemes and grammatical forms. In general, the study practice in these schools is significant rather in their findings (irrespective of systemacy) then in ineradicable feeling that all languages, that we know about, – is not all the truth about Language. The structure, which positively inclined linguists wrote about, implies something unstable, decaying, fluctuating, in opinion of apologists of new theory, so any searches of solid constants condemn to failure [21]. It is good illustrated by half-forgotten at present, but not deprived of demonstrative grounds of «syllabic» conception of Nurikhan Phattakh, having somewhat in common with constructs of N. Ya. Marr. (Once popular N. Ya. Marr's views of the language was subjected to criticism, including in strict administrative-ideological order;

nevertheless, many critics that are good experts in it, if to listen attentively to their words, always recognized N. Ya. Marr's glottogonic theory to juxtapose language with biological genetic substance as certain «intuitive» right). The Tatar linguist as a critic of comparative historical method stated his view of this theory, showing on the basis of empirical examples, that neither typology of forms, nor even comparative-genetic schools are incapable of explaining the phenomenon of unexpected juxtaposition at phonetic and lexical semantic levels. Many achievements of Indo-European theory are under grounded criticism for this reason. Moreover, in many cases, N. Phattakh prefers a certain correlation of word stock to etymology on question of ancient layers, suggesting not highlighted unstructured patterns [22].

We are not mistaken to suggest that, in fact, it was G. Bashlyar, a French philosopher epistemologist of the 20th century, who wrote about system positions in literary sphere. In his opinion, creative fantasy of a writer is manifested in itself in a literary image; the image, in spite of being related with archetypes, is not subordinate to the law of linear historical determination – the image cannot be agued to be «the result of an impact or impulse». Quite the contrary, «the distant past resonates with variety of echoes in a flash of image, and it is unclear what depth these echoes are reflected and faded at». And then, referring to non-classical geometry of Mynkovsky as potential pattern of definition of «spatial» manifesting an image («dream»), he writes: «one may restore subjectivity of images and estimate their scale, power and meaning of their trans subjectivity due to ability to be communicated that is peculiar to unusual image – this fact having fundamental ontological meaning... only with the help of phenomenology – considering the creation of the image in individual consciousness» [23].

4. SUMMARY

The presented analysis, as a result, demonstrates the importance of new approach in methodological program of the modern literary comparative studies.

5. CONCLUSION

There is no way of contrasting synergetic point of view with programs, though in being in unity with the other non-classical methods it forms «the third» dotted line of the development of the modern Russian comparative studies – the line which overcomes the extremes of comparative-typological and comparative-genetic approaches. In any methodology one can find «Achilles heel», that is why it is more efficiently to apprehend new strategy on the principle of complementarity.

In due time V.E. Khalizev suggested an idea of necessity «non-oriented» development of literary studies for any completed approach, in his opinion, reduces, and, consequently, simplifies, roughens, schematizes living body of literary world [24]. In this way, it is true, especially due to the events of the 20th century, when any scientific approach became, sometimes in spite of primary circumstances, an element of ideological struggle (whether it was Marxism of economic basis or Freudianism of insight into subconscious mechanisms of human's deed). Pathos of the idea of V. E. Khalizev is clear, but the other is clear: «non-oriented» movement in literary study striving for harmonize approaches not often states their electivity and – the main thing is to paradoxically bring a dialogue element out of the literary schools. Any scientific viewpoint is conscious simplification of the subject, rational-schematic construing its pattern, «mould» of a thing. The other thing is a dialogue that is possible in the situation of collision of such reductions. Let us remember antique dialectics of Platon as «conversation», in which subject image grew ripe as natural (not mechanical!) «sum» of reduced details.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author assert that the represented data do not contain the conflict of interests.

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